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Neighborhood Challenge Program

What is *Energize Missouri Homes*?

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources created *Energize Missouri Homes* (EMH) to distribute funding received from the U.S. Department of Energy, or U.S. DOE, under the State Energy Program, or SEP. The purpose of *Energize Missouri Homes* is to provide funding, through a competitive grant process, to assist Missouri residents in reducing energy costs and improved awareness of energy usage, specifically by:

- Decreasing fossil fuel emissions.
- Creating and retaining jobs.
- Spurring economic growth.
- Improving the energy efficiency of Missouri homes.

What are the programs under *Energize Missouri Homes*?

The department has set aside a portion of SEP funds for a residential program which is marketed under the umbrella name *Energize Missouri Homes*. Under *Energize Missouri Homes*, the department has established three programs including Homeowner Upgrades and Geothermal, Multi-Unit Residential Retrofits and Neighborhood Challenge.

What is the State Energy Program, or SEP?

Congress created the U.S. DOE State Energy Program in 1996 by consolidating two other programs: the State Energy Conservation Program, or SECP, and the Institutional Conservation Program, or ICP. Both programs went into effect in 1975. The State Energy Program provides grants to states and U.S. territories to promote energy conservation and reduce the growth of energy demand in ways that are consistent with national energy goals. The SEP is the only U.S. DOE sponsored activity that encompasses renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and addresses all sectors of the economy.

What is the Neighborhood Challenge Program?

The Neighborhood Challenge Program provides homeowners with the opportunity to realize measurable energy savings that will result in reduced energy costs and increased awareness of energy usage. The program provides grants to develop and implement a behavioral efficiency program. The objective of the Neighborhood Challenge Program is to encourage participating homeowners to voluntarily reduce their energy use by providing them with information regarding how their usage compares to that of other program participants.

What is the total funding amount available under the Neighborhood Challenge Program?

The department will distribute up to \$2.25 million of the SEP funds under the Neighborhood Challenge Program through a competitive grant process.

What documents and forms are included in the application? Where are they available?

The program documents are available on the web site at www.EnergizeMissouri.org and consist of:

- Program guidelines (PDF document).
- Program manual (PDF document).
- Application forms (Fill-in-able PDF document).
- Program webinar.

Is there a copy of the program introduction webinar available?

The webinar presentation is available on the program website at www.EnergizeMissouri.org.

If an applicant is awarded funding is there a requirement that the project moves forward?

Yes. Once a subgrantee signs a grant agreement with the department the project is required to move forward. Monitoring will occur throughout the life of the grant to guarantee that projects are being implemented and funds are being spent at a pace that allows complying with the Jan. 31, 2012 deadline for project completion. The department reserves the right to reallocate awarded funds if it is determined a subgrantee will not be able to complete their project within the grant period.

Can projects be completed with in-house labor? Can in-house labor costs be included in the grant?

Yes, in-house personnel can be used and the costs can be included in the application as part of funds leveraged. Applicants should be aware of applicable Recovery Act requirements, such as the Davis Bacon Act, which will require that prevailing wages, weekly certified payroll and other requirements must be followed for workers employed on the energy efficiency project.

How many subgrantees will be selected?

There is \$2.25 million available with various funding levels; therefore we are expecting to award at least 4 to 8 grants.

What is the Home Energy Report?

The Home Energy Report is an opportunity for homeowner to receive information about their energy use. Reports will be in hard-copy form and sent to test group participants once a month independent of the utility bill. The reports must contain the following information:

- A brief program introduction, including an explanation of the three categories of energy use for program participants; most efficient, average and least efficient neighbors.
- Home energy usage for the previous month.
- Chart or ranking system that depicts the homeowner's usage compared to the other categories.
- No-cost and low-cost electric efficiency and conservation tips for the homeowner.

- Promotion of utility's energy programs and other *Energy Missouri Homes* programs available to the homeowner.
- Consistent branding that will be approved by the department.

For more details on the Home Energy Reports please refer to section 2 Eligible Activities – Program Categories of the program guidelines.

What is the scope of the program and what are the required number of home owners and control groups?

The scope of the program falls under three categories; Home Energy Report, In-Home Monitoring Device and Combination.

- The Home Energy Report provides an opportunity to receive more detailed information about home energy usage to be compared with other households. The Home Energy Reports program category must select a test group of at least 15,000 homes. The control group must be at least 20 percent of the test group. The maximum grant award is \$500,000.
- The second program category is In-Home Monitoring Device in which subgrantees will be responsible for selecting a test group of homeowners to receive devices that display home energy usage data in an easy to understand manner. This program category requires a minimum size test group of 300 homes. The control group must be at least 20 percent of the test group. The maximum grant award is \$100,000.
- In the third Combination program category, homeowners receive home energy reports and have an energy monitoring device installed. The test group must consist of a minimum of 20,000 homes. The control group must be at least 20 percent of the test group. The maximum grant award is \$750,000.

For additional information and clarification please email EMH.challenge@shawgrp.com

Application Process

Why do you need leveraged funds?

Leveraged funds is one of the metrics that need to be reported to the U.S. Department of Energy. It is also one of the criteria under which applications will be evaluated.

Has the application deadline been extended?

Yes. Applications are now due by 4 p.m. on July 23, 2010.

If an application is submitted before the deadline, will we be notified early of awarded money?

How quickly could we get approval for awarded money?

Application may be submitted before the deadline of July 23, 2010, however, because this is a competitive program, applications will not be reviewed until after the deadline and all applicants will be notified of the results at the same time. The expected date of award is Aug. 30, 2010.

Are funds allocated on a first come-first served basis?

No, this is a competitive grant program. Applications will not be reviewed until after the deadline and all applicants will be notified of the results at the same time. The expected date of award is Aug. 30, 2010.

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American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Requirements

Are National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, requirements applicable to potential projects?

All eligible projects under the Neighborhood Challenge Program are categorically excluded.

Do *Energize Missouri Homes* dollars lose their federal identity when they come through DNR?

These funds flow through and are managed by the department. However, they remain federal dollars subject to all transparency requirements of U.S. DOE. They are also federal ARRA dollars and therefore require stringent reporting requirements.

Does an applicant need to bid the project prior to submitting an application?

No. Projects are expected to be bid after the date of award and once the department provides subgrantees with additional guidance on procurement and other Recovery Act requirements.

Is there a general or standardized bidding process for ARRA funded projects?

Subgrantees will need to follow state competitive procurement laws for the bidding process. For more information about the Missouri Procurement Requirements please visit the Office of Administration vendor manual at: <http://oa.mo.gov/purch/vendorinfo/vendormanual.pdf>

If a grant is awarded, is follow up documentation required to be submitted?

Yes, this will be provided in the subgrantee award letter and grant agreement. There will also be monthly progress reports in accordance with ARRA reporting.

What are the ARRA reporting requirements?

The ARRA reporting requirements are stringent, as reporting and accountability is of primary importance for stimulus dollars. Subgrantees will be required to submit monthly progress and expenditure reports in accordance with the requirements of the grant agreement. Additional quarterly, annual and completion reports may be requested from the subgrantee. Subgrantees are only responsible for reporting to the department and will not have to report to the federal government. The department reserves the right to structure reporting requirements on a project-specific basis.

What is the length of grant agreement for reporting requirements?

It begins at the time of award and will end in Jan. 31, 2012.

Will each subgrantee report to the department, or directly to U.S. DOE?

Subgrantees will report to the department only, but will need to follow federal reporting guidelines.

In calculating the jobs created/retained by the proposed project, can we consider the work performed by the staff as a job retained?

Only if the staff is directly funded by Recovery Act dollars would that count as a job created or retained. Work performed by staff as in-kind labor does not count towards the jobs created/retained metric.

For compliance with Buy American, does the product have to be assembled in the U.S., or every component manufactured in the U.S.?

It is only required that the final product is assembled in the U.S. However, the Buy American provision does not apply to this program as all of the buildings that would be included in Neighborhood Challenge Program would be privately owned.

Would it be permissible, as an owner of a Central Contractor Registry, or CCR, registered company, to allow a distribution cooperative to use our CCR on their application?

Subgrantees will have to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry in order to receive *Energize Missouri Homes* funds. This is a requirement of the Recovery Act. While CCR registration is not required at the time applications are submitted, applicants should be aware that they will need to be registered if selected for award and that the registration process could take up to several weeks.

For additional information and clarification please email EMH.challenge@shawgrp.com

Timeline

Can applicants apply for funding for projects that have been completed or are currently under way?

Any project that is already completed or started prior signing a grant agreement with the department will not be eligible for Neighborhood Challenge Program funds. Eligible projects include those that are currently being planned and are ready to begin as soon as they receive funding.

When are applications due?

Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. on July 23, 2010.

When will funds be awarded?

Final awards for the Neighborhood Challenge Program are expected to be made Aug. 30, 2010.

When will subgrantees receive the money?

The grant agreement will specify conditions of payment and the payment schedule. The subgrantee will be reimbursed by the department for all allowable expenses incurred in performing the scope of services. The subgrantee shall report project expenses and submit original invoices to the department for payment as required by division and program per the grant agreement.

Are the projects required to be completed by a certain date?

Yes. Projects must be completed by Jan. 31, 2012.

Why is the timeframe so short?

This is in response to a requirement from the U.S. DOE that all dollars be allocated by Sep. 30, 2010.

When will projects start?

Projects will begin after the date of award; otherwise the activities will not be eligible for funding.

For additional information and clarification please email EMH.challenge@shawgrp.com

Costs and Financial

Are consultants on grant administration or project implementation an eligible project cost?

Yes, consultants for grant administration or project implementation would be considered an eligible administrative expense; however, applicants are only allowed to use up to 5 percent of funds requested for administrative expenses.

When funds are awarded do they go directly to the subgrantee or can they go to a third-party contractor?

Funds will go directly to the subgrantee, and then the subgrantee can distribute to its contractors/subcontractors.

Are these grants paid in cash, or are they tax credits?

Grants will be paid in the form of a check or direct deposits, they are not tax credits.

What qualifies as administrative costs?

Administrative expenses mean those costs that cannot be identified with any single program but are indispensable to the conduct of grant activities. They include reporting, record keeping, budgeting and related management of grant activities.

What happens if the project is not finished by Jan. 31, 2012, will the subgrantee have to return the balance of the grant award or will it have to return the entire award?

If a project is not completed by Jan. 2012, the subgrantee will need to return the entire amount of award, regardless of whether a portion of the funds has already been spent, to the department. Then, the department will have to send the funds back to the U.S. DOE.

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